

PSY 416/516
CULTURE AND COGNITION
FALL 2023

Instructor Çağla Aydın cagla.aydin@ sabanciuniv.edu
Teaching Assistants: Yağmur Damla Şentürk
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Time : Wednesdays 8:40-11:30

Course Description

This course provides students interested in cognition with the opportunity to study the social and cultural aspects of thinking. It uses a psychological and a cognitive scientific, lens to explore issues such as the relationship between language and thought, narrative development, memory (individual and collective), emotion, morality, cultural transmission of knowledge. It will survey research and theory within cognitive psychology, linguistics, social psychology, and cross-cultural psychology and provide implications from and for philosophy, anthropology, literature, artificial intelligence. This course is also concerned with methodological and theoretical challenges in the integration of cultural perspectives in psychology.

Format

This course is an advanced level seminar course – which means it is discussion heavy. It is double-coded which senior level undergraduates and graduate students can take together.

Course Text

We will read original research reports and theoretical papers relevant to the topics above. These readings will be made available on a weekly basis on SUCourse by the instructor. The final list of topics and readings will be determined in part by the interests of the class members. Readings must be completed by the assigned date.

Structure

Again, this is a senior/master's level course, we will follow a seminar-class format. Class members will be responsible for the discussion of the material via three outlets: (1) using the discussion board (forum) on the course website (2) a presentation (or discussion;

whichever name that you prefer) for their assigned week, (3) thought questions (TQs) submitted for the presenter for that week.

Therefore, the students are expected to do the readings and be ready for a critical evaluation of the material. During the lectures, we will go over the major claims of the assigned readings, therefore without doing the readings, it would be very hard to follow the discussion for that particular day. The aim is for the students to learn about the current status and the major debates in the field, determine their own research interests and critically evaluate it. Such a practice is extremely helpful in coming up with research proposals for master's or doctoral theses as well as research grants for professional organizations.

Evaluation

Requirements for undergraduate and graduate students slightly differ.

UNDERGRAD AND GRAD

Leading the discussion/ Presentation.

- After the first couple of weeks into the semester, each student is expected to lead the discussion for an assigned week.
- Each presenter for that week will first present a general question, and then see if the assigned article was successful in answering that question; state what additional research questions the piece generates etc. More information on this will be provided later.

Exams

- There will be two exams; a midterm and a final. The midterm will be on **xxxx** and the final exam date will be determined centrally by the University. The midterm and final exams will be practically similar in terms of format. The final will focus on material presented in the second half of the semester. A portion of the final will require you to integrate material from the first half of the semester –hence, the slightly higher percentage of the final exam.
- Both exams will be “open book/notes exams”.

Class participation

- Please note that this item has an actual defined weight in the grade breakdown. Participation could be through (1) active participation in the discussion (class discussion or forum discussion), and (2) posting thought questions* for that week's discussion. Your participation and thought questions will make up 10% of your grade.

- Thought questions:** Class members are expected to post questions about that week’s topic/reading on SuCourse. They are due each Monday at 18.00. They will be graded out of 2 (0 = no submission, 1 = questions submitted simply for the sake of submitting, 2 = actual thought questions). These questions may be used by that week’s presenters or by other class members in the discussion thread.

GRADS ONLY:

Research Proposal: An important goal for the course is for the graduate students to develop an original research proposal based on their own research interests. Selected topics need to be approved by April 19th so that I can try to help you with any issues that you come across. To maximize benefits from this assignment, a grant application format will be followed. More details will be posted on the course website soon.

Grading Summary

Undergraduate 416

Presentation/Discussion	20%
Exam 1	30%
Exam 2	40%
Participation & TQs	10%

Graduate 516

Presentation/Discussion	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	30%
Participation & TQs	10%
Research Proposal	20%

A	90-100
A-	85-89
B+	80-84
B	75-79
B-	70-74
C+	65-69
C	60-64
C-	55-59
D+	50-54
D	45-49
F	0-44

NOTE: *Course content, requirements and policies are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.*

WEEK	DATE	SCHEDULE AND TOPICS	
1		Introduction Culture in Psychological Science	
2		Foundations of culture: Human universals	
3		Modularity Core Knowledge	
4		Theory of Mind	
5		Communication: Expression unleashed	
6		Language	
7		Mid semester critical lens	
8			Midterm Exam
9		Individualism & Collectivism & beyond	
10		Memory	
11		Causal Cognition	
12		Morality	

WEEK	DATE	SCHEDULE AND TOPICS	
13		Emotion	
14		Conclusion: Should we all be cultural psychologists?	

Classroom Etiquette

You are expected to show up on time, participate honestly in class activities and discussions, and treat your fellow students with tolerance and respect. Sleeping during the the class, texting, using your cell phone or computer for purposes other than the class activities are not allowed.

Disability Accommodations

If you need accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can schedule a time to meet privately and discuss arrangements.

Academic Dishonesty

Short version: Don't cheat.

Long version: Student Code of Conduct

All individual assignments must be completed by the student himself/herself, and all team assignments must be completed by the members of the team, without the aid of other individuals. If a team member does not contribute to the written documents or participate in the activities of the team, his/her name should not appear on the work submitted for evaluation.

Plagiarism is defined as 'borrowing or using someone else's written statements or ideas without giving written acknowledgement to the author'. Students are encouraged to conduct research beyond the course material, but they must not use any documents prepared by current or previous students, or notes prepared by instructors at Sabanci University or other universities without properly citing the source. Furthermore, students are expected to adhere to the Classroom Code of Conduct and to refrain from all forms of unacceptable behavior during lectures. Failure to adhere to expected behavior may result in disciplinary action.